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SUBJECT: UNAMI REP ON DA'WA, FEDERALISM AND UNIVERSITY ATTITUDES

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: PRT Babil officers met February 7 with Dr. Ala'a al-Enezy, UNAMI's representative for Babil Province and a law professor at Babylon University, and fellow law professor Dr. Hadi al-Keby. The professors expected a Da'wa governor to emerge in Babil province through a coalition in the Provincial Council formed primarily between Da'wa and the Sadrists. They expected such a coalition would foster less federalism than if an ISCI-dominated council and governor were to emerge. Al-Enezy and al-Keby said the popularity of religious political figures such as Moqtada al-Sadr had waned at Babylon University over the last two years. End Summary.

SKEPTICAL OF GREATER FEDERALISM

UNDER A DA'WA-SADRIST PC

¶2. (SBU) PRT Babil Rule of Law Advisor and Econoff met February 7 with Dr. Ala'a al-Enezy, UNAMI's representative for Babil Province and a law professor at Babylon University, and fellow law professor Dr. Hadi al-Keby. Al-Enezy and al-Keby expected a Da'wa governor to be elected from a Provincial Council coalition formed between Da'wa and Sadrism factions. Al-Enezy said a PC led by Da'wa and the Sadrists, rather than ISCI, would augur difficulties for developing provincial and local governance in Babil Province. A further complication, al-Enezy and al-Keby opined, was the issue of the Support Councils established by Prime Minister Maliki. They said these councils were likely to gain authority relative to Qadas (District Councils) and Nahias (sub-district councils) under a Da'wa-Sadrism coalition. Al-Enezy and al-Keby said most members of local councils, particularly at the district and sub-district level, viewed their positions as stepping-stones to higher offices rather than worthwhile in their own right.

BABIL UNIVERSITY OBSERVATIONS

¶3. (SBU) Asked to speculate on how their students might have voted, Al-Enezy and al-Keby said the majority of students at Babylon University gravitated toward religious parties, but that roughly one-third keep an open mind. They said the youth at their university were less religiously zealous than at other universities or among non-students in the same age-bracket. Al-Keby noted that, whereas two years ago many of their students had pictures of Moqtada al-Sadr on their notebooks, today Arab

pop stars were more likely to grace their covers.

COMMENT

¶4. (SBU) In addition to being the UNAMI representative for Babil, al-Enezy worked with the second phase of USAID's Local Governance Program (LGP) and is slated to continue with the upcoming LGP III. A large component of LGP III will involve supporting the efforts of district council and sub-district council members to exercise their rights and responsibilities under the Provincial Powers Law. While the composition of the PC, and its impact on the implementation of the Provincial Powers Law, still remain to be seen, we are encouraged to have a respected Iraqi partner so acutely aware of the motivations of local elected officials, as well as the potential tensions between provincial governing entities and the Prime Minister's Support Councils.

HILLAS